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Published in:

International Association of Societies of Design Research Conference 2019

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Unspecified

Publication date:
2019

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication from Aalborg University](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Giordano, F. B. (2019). Design Capability Building in City Government. In *International Association of Societies of Design Research Conference 2019* Manchester Metropolitan University Discourse Unit.

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Design Capability Building in City Government

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Government Innovation Labs are characterized by a direct connection with the public sector and created to tackle complex challenges that more traditional governmental structures seek to resolve. They are often working on a project basis with internal staff members to design innovative governmental services and policies, but they are also on a longer-term mission of changing the way governments operate. This longer term mission is what this study is interested in. Design capability building, in particular, is the focus of this paper. The way design capability building is approached in government context has been critiqued to be too focused on design methods and tools taught through workshops or short classes. The understanding of how we might increase design capability building in government context is limited. This calls into question how Government Innovation Labs may continue to increase design capability in city government. This paper aims at (1) highlighting the multiple meanings of design capability building on the basis of an existing theoretical model proposed by Lisa Malmberg which combines three modes of interpretation of design capability building: awareness of design, design resources and enabling organisational structures for design practice; (2) contributing to the service design literature with two state of the art case studies – *Civic Service Design Studio* in New York City and *Innovationshuset* in Copenhagen – which exemplify how all three modes of interpreting design capability building play out in practice; (3) reflecting on the role of Government Innovation Labs in building design capability.

Keywords: *Design capability building, enabling organisational structures, service design, government*

1. Introduction

Public problems are increasingly ill-defined or wicked (Rittel and Webber, 1973) or even super wicked (Banerjee, 2014) meaning unclear, complex and interdependent, with unpredictable dynamics and changing at a fast pace over time. Attempts at problem solving change the problem itself (Martin, 2009). This is the case of typical challenges public administrations are facing now – such as urban sustainability – and they can no longer be addressed with a traditional practice of problem solving.

At the same time collaborative design practices, such as service design (Blomkvist, Holmlid, & Segelstrom, 2010; Meroni & Sangiorgi, 2011) or co-design (Blomkamp, 2018), are increasingly seen as a potential response for addressing ill-defined public issues (Rittle, 1972; Cross, 2004; Design Commission, 2014; Manzini, 2015; Thorpe, Prendiville, & Oliver, 2016; Bason, 2017).

In this context, governments in various parts of the world have started to internally hire designers that are experts in collaborative practices – such as service designers (Blomkvist, Holmlid, & Segelstrom, 2010; Meroni & Sangiorgi, 2011) – rather than using external design consultants. To name just a few: *Laboratorio de Gobierno* in Chile, *Laboratorio para la Ciudad* in Mexico, *Alberta CoLab* in Canada. These units are commonly referred to as Government Innovation Labs, a “specific type of Public Innovation Place characterized by a direct connection with the public sector and created to tackle complex challenges that more traditional governmental structures seek to resolve” (Selloni, et.al, 2013). They are often working on a project basis with internal staff members – policy makers, public managers, public servants – to design innovative governmental services and policies, but are also on a longer-term mission of changing the way governments operate (ibid).

This paper is focusing on the “longer-term mission” of Government Innovation Labs, in particular, on the activity of *design capability building*. Some authors in the design literature noticed that there is a lack of consistency in the use of this concept (Mortati, et.al, 2014; Malmberg, 2017) and pointed that *design capability building* is often approached and limited to workshops/classes that are supposed to upskill government staff at design methods and tools (Malmberg, 2017; Blomkamp, 2018; Mortati, et.al, 2018).

This paper builds on a theoretical model proposed by Malmberg (2017). While Lima and Sangiorgi (2018) addressed a gap identified at the core of this model by adopting a knowledge transfer view on design capability – expanding the understanding of the factors that might affect the transmission of design knowledge in organization –, this paper uses the model of Malmberg as lens on two cases of Government Innovation Labs in order to characterise how design capability is defined and approached as well as to reveal how organisational conditions are developed to increase design capability in city government.

The first section of this paper presents the main theoretical framework of this study; three aspects that characterises the concept of *building design capability* as it is debated in the design and management literature. The second section uses the theoretical framework of Malmberg (2017) as a lens to look at two cases of Government Innovation Labs – *Civic Service Design Studio* and *Innovationshuset* – that are positioned within government and operating on a city government level. The last section highlights strategies to build design capability beyond workshops, methods and tools and includes opportunities and questions moving forward.

2. Theoretical framework: design capability building

The *design capability* term has been extensively used, but not always in a consistent way. It is often confused with other terms such as *capabilities*, *capacity*, *design competence* or *skill* (Acklin, 2013). This lack of a clear and agreed upon definition was pointed out by Mortati, Villari and Maffei (2014) and recently investigated by Malmberg (2017) through a systematic review of the design and design management literature. Her literature review showed that “the term *design capability* is the most commonly used in relation to an organization’s use or the development of use of design.” She further clarifies that “design capability is used both in relation to the qualitative and quantitative aspects related to an organization’s acceptance, understanding, and use of design”. Shortly put, design capability is about “an organization’s ability to utilize design” (Malmberg, 2017, p.50). Design in her work is understood as “an

approach to development that brings with it methods and tools that ensure a user-centered and open mindset and attitude”.

Even more interestingly, Malmberg (2017) identified three overlapping patterns or aspects that characterise how design capability is used in literary discourses. These three aspects constitute what Malmberg titles “a tentative model of design capability derived from the use of the concept in the literature” – also, the theoretical model originally incorporates (fundamental) dimensions of transformative and organisational learning, however, for the sake of length and focus, this paper uses only the three dimensions described in figure 1.

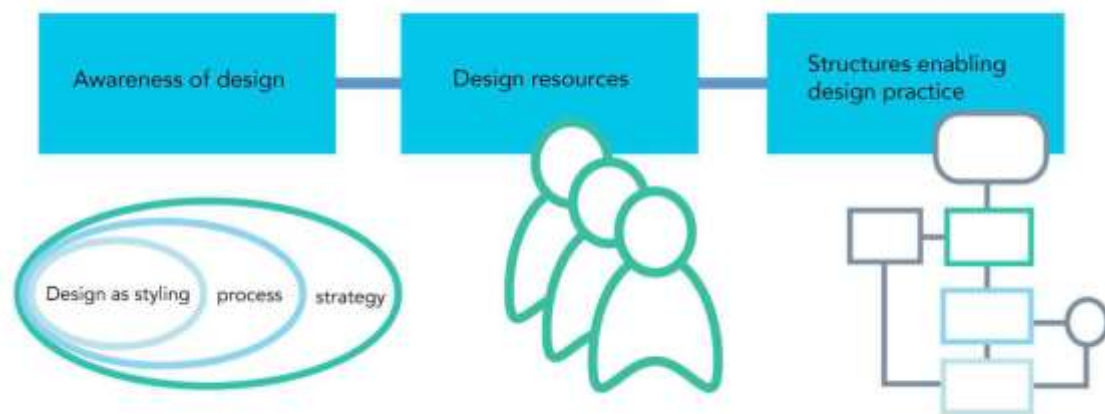


Figure 1. A tentative model of design capability. Source: Malmberg, 2017

2.1 Design capability as awareness of design

The first aspect Malmberg (2017) found is design capability as *awareness of design*, which is about developing the perception and understanding of design’s contribution by an organization. All sorts of communication artifacts and other means are used to increase the knowledge an organisation has about design. This aspect is often discussed through ladders of maturity, for example the *Design staircase* which shows design being either perceived at a low level, *styling*, at the middle level, *process*, and at the highest level, *strategy* (Ramlau, et. al, 2004). Awareness of design can also be understood the other way around, not necessarily the organisation being aware of design, but also expert designers recognizing existing design traditions in the organization as Junginger (2014) calls *organizational design legacies*. In her view, design is already embedded into organisations as “every organization develops and establishes certain kinds of design practices, design concepts and design approaches over time. This means that at best, we can introduce new design practices and different ways to think of design into organizations.” This aspect of awareness of design shows that the idea that a designer or an organisation may have about design plays a determinant role in building design capability.

2.2 Design capability as design resources

The second aspect is design capability as *design resources* which is “in relation to the design competency, skills, or activities brought by trained designers or the use of a design methodology” (Malmberg, 2017, p. 51). Design resources can be developed through the employment of expert designers – everybody can turn a situation into a preferred one but

some people become experts at it after long years of design education and training (Manzini, 2017) – or through training of staff in design thinking methods and tools. Setting up new facilities can also be considered design resources. According to this logic, having access to design resources means having access to a number of people with design competences (Malmberg, 2017, p.51). Therefore, if one embraces this understanding of the notion of design capability then one may think that the more people with design competences there are in an organisation, the more this organisation increases its design capability. This logic explains why numerous expert designers offer training workshops or programs in design thinking or service design methods to design-novice organizations.

2.3 Design capability as structures enabling design practice

The third aspect that Malmberg (2017) identified in the literature is design capability as *structures enabling design practice* or also labelled *enabling organisational structures*. This aspect emphasises an organization's ability to make use of a design practice or design resources (Malmberg, 2017, p.55). *Enabling organisational structures* is an aspect of design capability that can be seen at the intersection of design and management, as it is more about supporting and managing design resources in a way that makes them easily exploitable. Indeed, organisational structures – labour division and coordinating mechanisms – can be designed and affect an organisation functions, meaning “how materials, authority, information, and decision processes flow through it” (Mintzberg, 1979, p.65). Malmberg (2017) reports several authors who refer to this aspect as design management capabilities (Cantamessa, 1999; Acklin, 2013; Mortati et al, 2014). In short, understanding design capability building with this logic comes down to the question of how best to adapt/design structures of an organisation to facilitate the use of the particular design resources that are present in the organisation.

Table 1 summarises the three aspects presented above.

Table 1 Tentative model of design capability building. Source: Malmberg, 2017

(1) Awareness of design	(2) Design resources	(3) Structures enabling design practice
<i>Individual level</i>		<i>Organisation level</i>
Developing the perception and understanding of design's contribution by an organisation from design as styling to design as process then strategy. Expert designers recognizing existing design traditions in the organisation.	The more people with design competences the more the organisation increases it design capability. Ex: Employment of expert designers, training of staff in design thinking methods and tools or event, creative facilities.	Organisation's ability to make use of a design practice or design resources. How best to adapt the structures of an organisation to facilitate the use of design resources? At the intersection of design and management.

2.4 Relations between the three aspects

What the work of Malmberg informs us about, more than unpacking the *design capability* term and demonstrating the existence of multiple interpretations, is the complementary and

interrelated nature of the three aspects that characterise design capability building. Malmberg (2017) states, based on the work of Beltagui et al. (2011), Body (2008) and Mutanen (2008):

“The argument that some of the abilities put forward as design specific are in fact already present but not articulated in organizations suggests that design capability is not only a matter of holding specific skills and competence or executing certain activities. Design capability must also entail an understanding of what value these skills could potentially contribute and the ability to enable the exploitation of the skills to create that value and ensure the effective use of design.”

In other words, there must be a certain level of *awareness of design* for an organisation to have an interest in developing the corresponding *design resources*, however, the organisation will not be able to tap into these resources if there are no efforts in creating corresponding organisational structures; ones that enable the use of these particular kind of design resources. We can also reflect on the reverse effect, there might not be efforts dedicated to that aspect because of a lack of *awareness of design* or *design resources* in the organisation. This interdependence shows that an organisation will not increase its design capability by solely focusing on its *awareness of design* or the development of *design resources*. The organisation must also make sure to develop the “right” structures that can enable the use of the design resources in place. (Malmberg, 2017, p.65). “The ability of an organization to utilize design in its development work (i.e. its design capability) is dependent on both its awareness of design and the structures that enable design, and its resources.” (ibid).

2.5 Knowledge gap

What Malmberg eventually points out through her PhD thesis is the lack of emphasis on the development of enabling organisational structures for collaborative design practices, in public sector particularly. Indeed, public sector organisations are known to be highly bureaucratic in a way that prevents any kind of innovative practice to be brought in. Vibeke Carstensen and Bason (2012) talked about an “anti-innovation DNA” referring to hierarchy, bureaucracy, organisation silos, vertical and horizontal sectorisation and traditional roles; they asked whether collaborative policy innovation labs could help and examined one case – Mindlab, Danish government innovation lab. They emphasised as well the role of organisation structures:

“They (participating Ministries) are in very different stages of innovation maturity, and their use of project models and organisation structure has a great impact on the cross governmental unit’s ability to carry out its work. The MindLab experience is that all participating ministries need to have a well defined and functioning project model, and that it is helpful if they have the same degree or maturity in engaging in creative thinking.”

Mindlab was a pioneer lab, operating on a federal level since 2002. How have other and newer labs, in local government level, addressed these challenges? In this paper the author uses the “tentative model of design capability building” of Malmberg (2017) to look at two cases of Government Innovation Labs working at the forefront of their field in Copenhagen Municipality and New York City government.

Before the analysis, the following section presents additional contributions found in the design literature that connect with the studies of Malmberg, Vibeke Carstensen and Bason.

2.6 Additional contributions from the literature

Other key authors in the design literature recently drew similar conclusions and point out the need to increase design capability in government or public policy context beyond the teaching of methods and tools.

Blomkamp (2018, p.10) clarified the definition of co-design for public policy and emphasized that “embedding design into government is not just about upskilling policy workers on designerly methods, but also about bringing other disciplinary knowledge into the design process and will likely require cultural and structural change to enable different approaches to be applied.”

Likewise, Mortati, Christiansen and Maffei (2018) warns that “the frequent underestimation of what it takes to enable a useful uptake of innovation approaches and methods – including design – is concerning”. As a reason, the authors introduced the term *design craft in government* in the service design community and called for *more craft than method*. In their words, *method* refers to “the technical ability to learn, take up and apply design as a new kind of approach and process in public development practice”. Invoking design as a “craft” in governmental context is in their view a way to push design closer to tackle “the core of government operations.” To do so, they suggest a simplified but clear way to categorise design-led innovation in government into the following dimensions:

Principles: For a new method to be strategically applied and sustained over time as a new way of working (going beyond single projects or pilots), there has to be continuous focus on how design changes the culture of the organisation. This includes learning and rehearsing what kinds of mindsets and habits follow from doing design-led work in government and allowing for public officials to explore the meaning and value of design.

Conditions: Any successful application of design in government is dependent on the ability to create the appropriate conditions and enabling environment to strategically support the process. Consequently, there is a need to have a systematic focus on how to lead, organise for, manage, support, incentivise and sustain design-led innovation in public organisations.

Functions: To make the most of design, there is a need to systematically explore how to embed design approaches in core government operations, structures and roles - for example in public policy, procurement, HR, or regulation practice (going beyond setting up dedicated design labs and teams).

Although this categorisation offers a simplification of reality, one can already perceive the complex entanglement between all the components of an organisation, in particular cultures and organisational structures. Striving to change a culture in an organisation also means to put efforts into changing the organisational structures that allow for this culture to be expressed.

As the literature presented suggests, organisational structures are an important factor that needs to be tweaked and systematically assessed for a new design practice to be exploited. Recent cases are needed to understand how that could be done in practice.

3. The cases

This section looks into two cases of Government Innovation Labs through the lens of the tentative theoretical model “Design Capability Building” by Malmberg (2017) – presented in section 2. The analysis is conducted in two iterations and reveals two layers of actions; one ‘visible’ which confirms what the literature is pointing at and one ‘invisible’ which reveals hidden and inspiring strategies beyond workshop methods and tools for building design capability in a local government.

3.1 Introduction to the cases

Civic Service Design Studio and *Innovationshuset* are two Government Innovation Labs. They were selected for this study because they are state of the art cases and although the teams are operating in very different political, social, economic and cultural contexts – one is in New York City, the other in the capital of Denmark, Copenhagen – they were judged comparable because both are operating within municipal government level, using service design and co-design processes to rethink public services for the benefit of citizens and have design capability building as one of their main missions. The table below presents further characteristics based on the *Gov Innovation Lab Constellation* (Selloni, et.al, 2013) as well as other characteristics relevant for this study.

Table 2 General characteristics of Government Innovation Labs studied

Name	Civic Service Design Studio	Innovationshuset (Innovation House)
Created in	2017	2015 (closed January 2019)
Municipality	New York City government, USA (325 000+ employees for 8 600 000+ citizens)	Copenhagen Municipality, Denmark (40 000+ employees for 600 000+ citizens)
Positioned in / Owned by	Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity	Administration of Economy (2015-2017) Administration of Culture (2018)
Located in (figure 2)	Office of Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity	In its own building in Copenhagen, Meatpacking District
Role of government	Government as owner	Government as owner, funder and client
Activities	Research Communication Networking Capacity Building Design Piloting Advisory	Research Communication Networking Capacity Building Design Piloting
Status	Internal partner	In-house consultancy
Number of people	14 (including 4 full time)	30+ (including 5 full time)

in the team	in April 2019	in February 2018
Major in function	Bill De Blasio (Democratic)	Frank Jensen (Social Democrats)



Figure 2 (Left) Building in which Civic Service Design Studio is located – 18th floor, February 2019 (Right) Innovationshuset facility, March 2018

3.2 Data collection method

In order to look at *Innovationshuset* and *Civic Service Design Studio* through the theoretical framework “Design capability building” presented in section 2, the researcher (author of this paper) followed activities of *Innovationshuset* Copenhagen from January 2018 until it closed down in December 2018, then followed activities of *Civic Service Design Studio* in New York City between February and June 2019. During these time periods the researcher used a mixed-methods research, a combination of several qualitative methods – participant and non-participant observation as well as contextual interview methods often supported by visual tools for conversation and the theoretical model presented section 2 – since the investigation was more about the *how* and the *why* than about the *how much* or *when* or *where* (Kara, 2015), in other words the investigation covered qualitative rather than quantitative aspects. Audio and video recordings, photographs, field notes, project reports, drawings as well as artifacts produced by the labs were collected thanks to eight key persons/informants in Case A and thanks to five key persons/informants in Case B. All the informants were people with a design education background working respectively in *Innovationshuset* and *Civic Service Design Studio* except one who worked in NYC Government as Senior advisor. The researcher also reviewed relevant material available

online concerning *Innovationshuset* and *Civic Service Design Studio* – websites and social media profiles.

3.3 Visible layer

The analysis of the data collected was done in several iterations. The first iteration of the analysis focused on: how is design capability building defined by practitioners? What is it characterized by? The goal was to understand which aspects of design capability building practitioners referred to most. Increasing awareness of design or developing design resources or the development of enabling organisational structures?

3.3.1 Innovation and master class

At *Innovationshuset*, *innovation* was the key word. The lab was an *innovation house*, that helped with *competence development in innovation* which corresponded in practice to a master class (figure 3). Twice a year *Innovationshuset* taught a course in four modules, with two full-day classes in each module, over a period of six months. Employees – low management level – from the Public Administrations of Copenhagen Municipality applied for participation within their local administration. The participants were trained in four core elements of what *Innovationshuset* defined an innovation process: (1) the design process and tools, (2) design thinking, (3) co-creation and partnership development, and (4) return on investment. Each participant was required to bring their own project to use during the course.

In addition to this master class, every administration had several employees – project managers – who took the role of what was called *innovation partners*. He or she worked twice a week in *Innovationshuset* for an average period of six months. As the co-chief of innovation explained, the goal was for the employees “to gain design competences and innovation skills to take back home” meaning to bring back into their administration.



Figure 3. (Top) First day of Master class at Innovationshuset, 30th of January 2018 (Down left) Design thinking introduction in 1h (Down right) Design thinking introduction template page 8, 30th of January 2018

3.3.2 Design capacity, tools and tactics

At *Civic Service Design Studio* design capacity is the key word. In one of the interviews conducted, the researcher asked “what do you mean by building design capacity?” to the two design leads of *Civic Service Design Studio*. The first and most important elements to their eyes were:

- *Building capacity is giving people an understanding of the design process, why do designers do what we do when we do it.*
- *Teaching people methods and hard design skills such as making visual things, deconstructing data, talking to people, start small-get feedback-iterate-scale gradually, prototype, testing ideas before piloting.*
- *Demystifying design and building confidence in government employees to do/try parts of a design process in their day to day work.*
- *Giving people the frameworks and legitimacy to do what they are already doing.*
- *Supporting or building a community of practice for existing designers.*

In practice, that corresponded to the visible offer communicated on their website and to government staff:

- *Office Hours:* the team dedicates 4 slots of 1h meeting per week to offer guidance and support to any government staff of NYC government (or externals). According to a synthesis document produced by the design leads, after hearing attendee’s needs, the Studio member would generally provide support with (a) greater clarity, depth and

nuance to the Tools + Tactics guide, (b) tactical project-based advises, (c) translating design methods and knowledge.

- *Tools + Tactics* (figure 4): Tailored design methods and tools for the public sector context, available as open source on the website of *Civic Service Design Studio*, in a binder and in a small field guide as shown on figure 7. Tools + Tactics are categorised in the following way: (1) Set the Stage, (2) Talk with People, (3) Connect the Dots, (4) Try things out, (5) Focus on Impact, (6) Get more help (NYC Opportunity, 2019).
- Tools + Tactics in Action: Workshops providing facilitated training on service design. This type of support was requested in the Office Hours. The Studio also hosts bi-monthly *Civic Design Forums* in partnership with the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) Gov Lab + Studio to share best practices and run product and service design workshops. (NYC Opportunity, 2019)



Figure 4. Tools + Tactics and supplies provided by Civic Service Design Studio to NYC government staff. Source: NYC Opportunity

3.3.3 Complying surface

Bridging the understandings of practitioners from *Innovationshuset* and *Civic Service Design Studio* with the “Tentative model of Design capability Building” presented in table 1, it appears clearly that the ways in which the activity of *building design capability* is defined and approached correspond to the first two aspects of the model: *awareness of design* and *design resources*. Even if the vocabulary used is different, in both cases the attention is put on the individuals – the people who are working in the government – to grow their perception and understanding of design as well as their competences and skills in using service design methods and tools.

These first findings complies with what Malmberg (2017), Blomkamp (2018) and (Mortati, et. al, 2018) were pointing at: the issue that building design capability in government context is too often approached and limited to the activity of upskilling government staff. However, further exploration of the cases has shown otherwise.

3.4 Invisible layer

The second iteration of the analysis consisted in looking deeper into what the practitioners were doing and saying while having in mind all three aspects of design capability building as defined in table 1. In particular, the researcher sought for elements that would correspond to the aspect of *enabling organisational structures* which were missing in the first analysis.

Several elements were found and indicated that both labs were concerned with organisational structures and core government processes and had strategies for it although there were indirect and not advertised.

3.4.1 Mapping organisation structures

Copenhagen municipality is complex. As the co-chief of innovation of *Innovationshuset* said: “So many different strategies, very big municipality, then very different departments, very different arenas whether you’re working with youth, schools, whether you’re working with elder care, it feels like not the same organisation.” Therefore, to cope with this complexity, *Innovationshuset*’s team used organisation charts as compass and navigation maps for facilitating their work with the administrations. The organisation charts of the seven administrations were graphically designed, printed on large posters and put on the walls in the meeting/team rooms as shown on figure 5. The posters were annotated and helpful as one junior service designer said: “It’s nice to see which people you need to get in touch with when you are in different projects.”



Figure 5 (Left) Organisation chart posters of Copenhagen Municipality (Right) Junior service designer pointing at a key layer for collaboration across administrations (right), 27th of March 2018

3.4.2 Having internal allies

Innovationshuset was considered as an ‘internal consultancy’, but was physically and strategically speaking positioned outside of all the administrations (figure 6). As a consequence the team was lacking internal knowledge and influence. That is why they used the role of *Innovation partners* as a strategy. As the co-chief of innovation said, having *innovation partners* was like “trying to hack their business as usual from within.” She further explained the reason for having administration employees in *Innovationshuset*: “If you want to be closed to all (departments), you need to have some insiders because you can’t be aware of all the strategies and the cultural differences and making all the connexions yourself. But that’s also because we were a consultancy.”

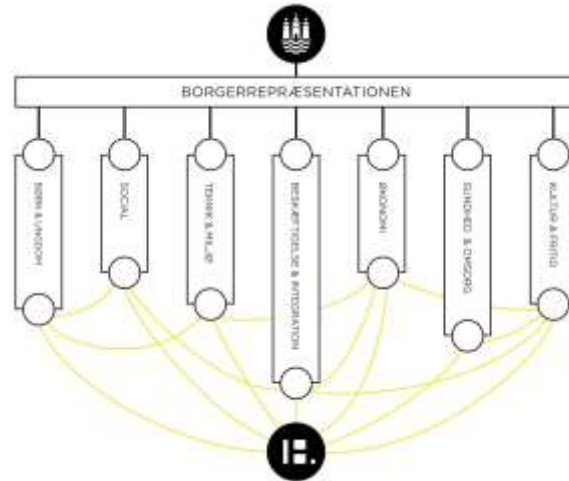


Figure 6 Diagram showing Innovationshuset's position (the black circle in the bottom) in relation to the administrations of Copenhagen Municipality. Source: Innovationshuset, January 2018

Similarly, *Civic Service Design Studio* mentioned the key role of a person that they call a *friendly bureaucracy hacker*, a term borrowed from people working in the City of Austin, which means someone in the government who is “good at navigating bureaucracy, advocating for the Studio to executive leaders and facilitating opportunities to happen”. The person in question was leading a division which meant that he was positioned in a way that enabled him to interact with all the decision makers and to build relationships with leadership of all the divisions. He explained during an interview:

“They (*Civic Service Design Studio*) say that (I’m a bureaucracy hacker) I think because everytime they push for us to adopt a type of design tool or tactic, I then have to say, that sounds like a great goal for us to achieve, now let’s talk about the three to height people that we need to engage or not engage, depending on our strategy, to try to do that and implement that. And who do I need to have offline conversations with to warm them up to the idea, who do I try to lead to the very end so they don’t create hurdles for us to cross that really don’t need to be.”

3.4.3 Influencing core procurements

In NYC government, a “Request for Proposal” (RFP) is the process by which the City solicits procurements, in other words purchases goods and services. RFPs are the vehicle for City agencies to conduct service design projects, and are opportunities to turn organisation structures into enabling ones for a service design practice. *Civic Service Design Studio* is not entitled to directly modify RFPs, however the team works with the agencies that are to write RFPs for service design scopes, and encourages agencies to write these collaboratively with relevant stakeholders.

4. Questions, opportunities and further research

The study of the two Government Innovation Labs cases, *Innovationshuset* in Copenhagen municipality and *Civic Service Design Studio* in New York City government, indicates that design capability building does happen beyond the teaching of design methods and tools to employees. However, this work is at first glance not so visible nor explicit. Indeed, Government Innovation Labs know the importance of adapting organisational structures to

more enabling ones, but they are not necessarily expected or entitled to modify them directly. That is why the labs find alternative ways to navigate in it, through mapping, they find internal allies and influence or advise the ones that are entitled to modify organisational structures.

Labs seem to be 'juggling' with their ambitions and what the organisation they are in can accept or tolerate. The risk of letting the work of a Government Innovation Lab appear as 'just' teaching new design methods and tools is that the Labs can be judged inefficient and get discarded by those in power who did not realise or knew about the actual breadth of the work required to generate impact.

Should the work of modifying organisational structures be more clearly visible and explicit up front to the organisation? A government could see it as a resource if it was explicitly stated and if the role of Government Innovation Labs was somehow codified and introduced in the organization as a normal practice. Another question is if it is Government Innovation Labs's role only? Or is it lying in the collaboration and joined efforts of executive leaders with Government Innovation Labs? As seen in this study, executive leaders can have a key position within the government to influence or even change organisational structures into ones that would be more enabling for collaborative design practices, but do they know how these new structures should be like?

In NYC government, the researcher recorded an *Office Hours* meeting (described section 4.3.2) which explicitly addressed organisational structures and leadership visioning. The participant of the meeting was a leader in one of the divisions of the Health agency and asked for feedback on a discussion guide and strategic plan. The leader wanted to interview her team about: "how might we use this strategic plan to design an optimal organisational structure for the division?" The topic of organisational structures was according to the leader "not unspoken, but spoken regularly" and recognised as a barrier. The leader explained what the team had reported: "we know how to do our work, but we need the structures that support it." The main issues the leader expressed about addressing this question were:

- *we want to get to more detailed into what organisational structures mean*
- *people have different point of view, how to deal with that?*
- *we have done interviews but we need the discussion to be more actionable*

This evidence indicates that leaders may not know what an enabling organisational structure is for a collaborative practice and lack the ability to facilitate a productive dialog with their colleagues and employees about this topic. Government Innovation Labs are instead limited by their status of new-in consultant or partner when it comes to modifying core government processes, however they have the ability to facilitate collaborative discussion that can lead to action as well as the ability to nurture the generation of alternative visions to inspire leadership and management.

Malmberg (2017) had advised practitioners (1) *the active involvement of actors with mandate to transform structures in the organization* (2) *time to develop design resources and enabling structures*. An addition to that could be: participatory interventions supporting these actors in defining collectively what enabling structures may be. Further research will explore these modes of intervention and take inspiration from the term 'enabling bureaucracy', suggested a long ago by Adler and Borys (1996) which may reconcile bureaucracy with design.

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Acknowledgement: This paper is part of a three-year PhD study (2017-2020) investigating co-design in city government, supervised by Amalia De Götzen and Nicola Morelli. The project is fully financed by Aalborg University and is conducted in collaboration with the innovation house of Copenhagen municipality and Civic Service Design Studio - Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity of New York City. Many thanks to the team of *Innovationshuset* and in particular Frida Flensted-Jensen, Diana Arsovic Nielsen, Nadja Rikke Andersen and Kirsten Lynge. Many thanks to the team of *Civic Service Design Studio* and in particular Mari Nakano, Caroline Bauer, Emily Herrick, Timothy Reitzes as well as Markus Kessler from the Administration of Children Services. Special thanks to Eduardo Staszowski for your guidance and for establishing the collaboration with Civic Service Design Studio. Many thanks as well to the reviewers for their useful feedback.